

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,973,529 to Grasso et al. (hereinafter "Grasso"). The Examiner alleges that the claims are rendered obvious by the teachings of Grasso.

The present invention, as recited in claims 1-4 and shown in Figs. 1-4, provides for a fuel cell power generating system comprising a fuel cell unit 1, a water storage tank 2 for supply water to serve as coolant for the fuel cell unit 1, a water treatment system 3 which performs purification of the supply water in the water storage tank 2 and supplies the resultant water as coolant to the fuel cell unit 1, a heat exchanger 4 for recovering the exhaust heat as heating means which heats up water using the exhaust heat from the fuel cell unit 1, a hot water storage tank 5 which retains hot water obtained by using the heat exchanger 4, and a condensed-water supply system 6 which supplies the water storage tank 2 with condensed water obtained by condensing steam from the hot water in the hot water storage tank 5.

Grasso, as shown in Fig. 1, discloses a fuel cell power plant 10 that includes a fuel cell stack 12, a fuel processing system 14, a cooling system 16 and a coolant recovery and supply system 18. The fuel processing system 14 includes a fuel processor that receives steam and a raw fuel, such as natural gas. The cooling system 16 has a coolant pump for circulating coolant, a heat exchanger for removing heat from the coolant and a steam separator for separating steam from the coolant. Steam separated from the coolant in the steam separator is flowed to the fuel processor. A conduit extends from the steam separator to the coolant pump to enable the coolant pump to draw coolant from the steam separator.

Independent claims 1 and 5, however, clearly recite a hot water storage tank acquired by a heating means. Grasso discloses hot water stored in the fuel cell. Furthermore, claims 1 and 5 clearly recite that condensed water is obtained by condensing steam from the hot water in the hot water storage tank. Grasso discloses drawing steam from the coolant, and supplying the condensed steam to a degasifier.

Grasso never takes advantage of condensing the steam from the hot water in the hot water tank to supply condensed water to the water storage tank, thereby reducing the load of demineralization or the like applied to the water treatment system, thus reducing the equipment cost and the operation cost, as is achieved by the present invention.

Furthermore, independent claims 6 and 7 clearly recite a hot water storage tank and an auxiliary water supply path for supplying auxiliary water to the hot water storage tank, in which a heat exchanger condenses steam in an exhaust gas discharged from the fuel cell stack by cooling the steam with the auxiliary water flowing in the auxiliary water supply path. Water purifying equipment for purifying water recovered by the heat exchanger is supplied as coolant to the coolant circulation path. Grasso fails to teach the above limitations.

It has been held by the Courts that to establish prima facie obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. In re Royka, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). Grasso fails to disclose or render obvious the limitations as provided in the claims as stated above. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of claims 1-7 under Grasso is improper, and should be withdrawn. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 1-7.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application be allowed and a Notice

of Allowance issued. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicant's attorney would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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